

SMALL AND WEBB ON ARNOLD'S TRAIL.

An Epic of August, A.D. 1932.

Travel is broadening - whatever the method,
Whoever the persons - wherever the place.
To wander at large is to gain education,
Whatever the diet, whatever the pace.
But given a car that will go - give it oil enough,
Climb perpendicular, and pull thru a slough,
And given a crew who can smile when the going's rough,
Ah! Then travel's a pleasure and I'll tell you how.

First make all arrangements with great care beforehand:
Call in your servants or farm out your child.
Have your car overhauled - that expense is on your hand -
Throw in a few duds and set forth free and wild.

Early in the morning of a lazy August day
Loaded to the limit, the Nash is on its way.
Starting from the Ferry Road
Leaving Ocean Park.
One last wish for Pop and Dot,
Then onward to the lark.
Gracie at the mike,
Young Small at the wheel,
Webb and wife for ballast
And to keep an even keel.

"And you may laugh," says Howard,
(Once when he got a show)
"But I mean to keep at 35
And see as well as go.
This high speed stuff to get someplace
Ain't my idea at all.
I mean to take it easy." And
We all agreed with Small.

We rolled along serenely, thru the cities on our way,
Seeing every flower and every lamb at play.
Portland and Auburn were soon but memories,
Houses became fewer, more woods and fields and trees,
And soon in pretty Farmington we entered at the Zoo.
And there we saw the monkeys, the elk and lions, too.
And pity filled our human hearts so we wished to let them out -
But something kept us from it - we were so close about.
But the day was warm, and the fragrance was the fragrance of a Zoo -
So we went to see the Normal School - the next best thing to do.

Then on. By this time the sun was riding high
And oft from out the back seat came forth a hungry sigh.
And Gracie started urging that Howard soon should park
As she'd like to eat her lunch, please, before it got too dark.
And finally, and finally, somewhere in the woods of Strong
Howard found the place to park that he had sought so long.
Just the proper woods road, with birch and blue spruce shade.
There we spread our weary legs, and there our lunch was laid.
And even Grace admitted - when the food had made its mark -
That Howard always knew his way when he chose a place to park.

Then on, thru Carrabassett - don't confuse with Caratunk -
(The latter is a regular town - the first, a woodsman's bunk.)
And on, through woods, to Eustis with its grand Cathedral Pines
Where we stopped and mused and felt the urge
To compose poetic lines.
Then to Eustis Ridge we wended, and clambered to the top,
Tho Gracie feared the kine might bite, she did not dare to stop.
Cloud-high, the Tip-Top Shack stood bare, wind-buffed, alone -
A little hunch-back tended shop - we all enjoyed a cone.

Then down that ridge we gaily dropt, nor guessed at what a way
We had to climb, and squeeze, and drop before the close of day.
'Twas Arnold's Trail, they told us, we had to follow thru -
To find our way across the line - we soon felt sure 'twas true.
Down one steep slope our narrow path dropt to a log-lain bridge,
Then up into the sky we'd shoot to still a higher ridge.
The wooded banks on either side were rich in tree and fern,
But with such sudden ups and downs, we had no chance to learn.
And Howard's mouth set grimly as the Nash nosed toward the sky
And Gracie paled and silenced as another car squeezed by.
Then down, down, to the valley the good Nash dived, and then,
With scarce a level respite, shot toward the sky again!

So on, for many risky miles, we up and down did ride,
Until at last, with heaving chests, we gained the other side.
And soon we crossed the border-line - Woburn was the place.
And what a change in scenery now met us face to face.
Farming country - fences - babies - horses - cattle -

saints and swine -

Fences - horses - shrines and babies - everywhere across
the line!

On by fences - fences - fences - not a chance to stop and rest.
Treeless fields and paintless houses - but all churches of the best.
Here a shrine and there another; hovel homes and churches grand.
Poverty and grandeur, neighbors, was the order thru the land.

On we went - between the fences - 'til at last we stopped to eat.
('Tis an old Canadian custom, to do all things in the Street.)
Then on, and to Megantic, where a youth with courteous smile
Pointed out our way to Beauceville - Was it 20 or 30 mile?
And at last we crossed the long bridge - rode a bit about the town -
Booked ourselves at Hotel Beauceville; took a walk and settled down.
Quiet, peaceful, unspoiled Beauceville - by the river Chaudiere,
French and friendly; 'twas a restful, happy visit with you there.

Early in the morning rose the Webbs and strolled around

Charming scenes of pastoral life on Beauceville slopes abound.
Later came the Smalls - in time for coffee hot,
Eggs, cooked twice and toast and fruit and other things we got.
Then, in the lovely morning and young in heart and soul
We started o'er the thirty miles to Levis and our goal.
In record time, to Levis we entered with great good will,
And suddenly we started down a hill that was a hill!
Down winding to the Ferry, onto which at last we drove.
And the heavy craft with motion smooth into the river hove.

Just to think of all that hist- Oh, Lord, Howard, do be careful!"

And then we saw the Upper Town. Webb boldly chose a cab.
(A fresh young driver hopped around but Webb ignored his gab.)
In an old four-wheeled Victoria grand we were seated two by two.
(Yes, there were two-wheeled coleches but for us they'd never do.)

Till at length our ride was ended, near the Chateau Frontenac
And at length to Lower City, urged by hunger, we turned back.
Howard led us to a café, recommended by a cop
There we ate both well and cheaply - but of liquors took no drop.

There we saw the cyclorama - most magnificent sight one sees -
And the famous Sacred Stairway, where the pious wear their knees.
And we marvelled at the grandeur of the new shrine, not complete -
Wondering if such lavish giving made a poor man's life more sweet.
(Small was soon among the missing - Gracie worried, went to look,
Found him talking with a Brother, very friendly, in a nook.)

Came the morn; refreshed and youthful, ready for the sights again
Went we to our Chink's for breakfast - (bill, not breakfast
caused a pain.)

Small then went to get his motor - found his clean car cleaner still
(But he never flicked an eyelash as he paid the extra bill!)
Then we checked out from our hotel; started forth to take a walk
(Walking gives one time to see things, time for gazing, time for talk.)

Up the hill we bravely alpined, but in truth I must admit
Gracie balked at Breakneck Stairway - would in elevator sit -
So we rose up to the Terrace, looked at Frontenac once more
Climbed the stairs up to the Fortress and the old fort did explore.
Here a guide, with rare dry humor, showed us all about the place
Told us reams of hoary hist'ry, made us feel there face to face,
With the brutal, hopeless, struggle that past centuries have known
Wolfe and Montcalm live in story - what of him who hewed the stone?
What of him, the numbered thousands forced to winter in a stall?
What of him who died in dungeons, most inhuman death of all?
Grace, tho' safe, not for a moment could endure that narrow cell
With its clawed and fisted oak door - once on earth the Perfect Hell.

But away! To see the cannon captured at our Bunker Hill.

(Here the guide's naive admission about Britons gave a thrill:

"Were the British less pig-headed, you'd have all been British still.")
"Sure," spake Gracie, thinking backward, "I should think they'd have

a few
Of the cannons we took from them, in that war, now wouldn't you?"
Finally our tour was ended. Small & Webb did gladly pay
"For the upkeep of the Fortress" - it ought to help our cause, someday.

To the Lower Town returned we, bade goodby to citadel
Even walked the Breakneck Stairs down - Grace did that very well.

Then on busy old St. Jean Street, Howard found a place and stopped
Said he'd set and watch the traffic while the Webbs and Gracie shopped.
Shop we did - for shops were plenty, fine and cheap the
things to buy -

'Til Webb felt for purse - 'twas wanting! - Sank our spirits,
once so high.

Back then to one shop we hurried but no bill fold had been found
Twenty dollars gone for nothing - what could have more doleful sound?
Calm and cool and philosophic, Webb declared it might be worse
For he still had other moneys, in another safer purse.
Hungry, now, tho' rather gloomy, at the Plaza we sought food -
At the door Webb found his twenty dollars! My, that dinner
tasted good!

In another pocket lurking was that bill fold, black and small,
Moral: if one pocket's empty, try the others - try them all!

Full of dinner: full of spirits (mental): now came thots of U.S.A.
(2 P.M.) We crossed the Big Bridge, happy on our homeward way.
Soon our perfect weather failed us: gray skies wept to see us go,
Greasy were Canadian roadways, Small drove calmly, safe and slow-
Jackman was the town we wanted - and we reached it, crossed the line
Glad to see some painted houses - and a mile without a shrine.
At the Customs, the Inspector shooed us quickly from the place -
(Due to Howard's cheerful frankness and to Webb's good honest face!)

On we drove, thru Road Construction where the Nash pulled thru
a slough

On we went thru woods and clearing - we were getting weary now.
And at eve we reached our haven - at the Forks, at Marshall's Camp.
Now the rain had ceased and lovely seemed the wild, all fresh and
damp.

Such a supper - such fried chicken! What a waitress! What a host!

Then the night at our log cabin - was it that we liked the most?
Dear Log Cabin, by the river, with its luxuries, comforts, all.
And a noble gray stone fireplace ("That's a good job, too," said Small.)
Soon the maple logs were blazing: Warmed and contented there we sat
Pleased with everything in general: What an evening was that!
But at last the red coals glowered; Webb's wife's eyes were bright no more.
And from Howard's quiet corner one might think there came a snore.
Roused we then and out to linger on the porch to take the air
Listened to the racing river, watched the moon, Romance was there!
So to bed. In two big bedrooms, four big beds were soft and low,
('Twas discovered, in the morning, one of those beds was detrop!)

Came the dawn, up rose the Webbses, forth they walked to see the world
Then returned to wake the Smallises, still in slumber tightly curled.
Then to breakfast there at Marshall's, heard the story of mine Host -
All about the Arnold Trail fight - Do we still believe his boast?
Soon away! Goodbye, Log Cabin, rushing river in the rear -
If our luck is good, Dear Cabin, we'll be back another year!

Going home! Somehow the music of those words began to tell
In our hearts they waked a longing just to know that all was well.
Rolled we on and on, to Bingham - walked the Dam that Wyman made,
There descended 'neath the river, seven-score feet quite unafraid.

How we realized, going, place, getting 'round and seeing all,
What it is to have an escort like the genial, chatty Small!

But away! Along the river, all is fair on earth and sky.
On thru Anson, on to Clinton - There some frugal lunch we buy.
Then to Unity, big game region, where we paused to eat a bite.
(Here Grace found some strange brown streakings on the car's left door - a sight!

But no one could say how came they.) So to call on Gracie's aunt.
(We don't doubt but bear and moose-kind find that town a happy haunt.)

But at last, the call was ended - let us hurry on our way.
Howard chose to go thru Monmouth - on thru Lewiston, to Gray.
Somehow, Webb's wife, from Webb's shoulder, didn't see quite all that route!

Was it somewhere out in Windham that we stopped to eat some fruit?

But Oak Hill at last was ours - and the well-known Portland Road.
Almost Home! The music's louder; no need now our minds to goad!

Now we're there! And here is Dottie - There is Poppy! What so rare
As to know that one is Home again - and to know it's all well there!
Home again! Those words are music - sweetest, happiest old refrain:
The best part of every journey is the time we're home again!

---L'ENVOI---

Travel is broadening - whatever the method
Whoever the persons - wherever the place -
But given our choice - it's back to Quebec again
Along Arnold's Trail - with Howard and Grace!